

ASCEND HVAC

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6 Ways to Prepare Your HVAC for Winter



Winter is just around the corner, and the last thing you want is to face the season's first snowstorm without a properly functioning furnace. Don't leave your home's temperature up to chance—take the necessary steps to prepare your HVAC for the brutally cold winter weather.

1. Clean your furnace completely.

One of the best (and most obvious) ways to prepare your HVAC for the cold, harsh winter weather is to clean it thoroughly and completely. This means removing any and all debris on the outdoor unit as well as inspecting the indoor unit for damage and waste. Before [cleaning your furnace](#), be sure to locate the access panel and shut down the system to avoid accidents. Next, you should remove the air filter and either clean or

replace it. You should also look for soot buildup in your furnace's combustion chamber and scrape it out using a tool like a wire brush. Finally, if your furnace blower appears to have accumulated dirt or debris, disconnect the fan, clean and wash it thoroughly, and then return it to its proper place. If you lack the skills or resources to clean your furnace safely, contact a professional HVAC repair company to do the dirty work for you.

2. Replace all of your home's air filters.

Cleaning and replacing your home's air filters is arguably one of the most important aspects of [HVAC maintenance](#) when it comes to prepping your furnace for winter. Air filters keep the dust, dirt, and debris in your home from getting into your furnace's combustion chamber. Clogged filters result in clogged furnaces that will decrease your home's energy efficiency and increase the likelihood that you will need a [furnace repair](#). Fixing a broken furnace requires lots of equipment, materials, money, and time. And while you wait, your house will freeze--which is not an enjoyable experience for anyone. The good news is that replacing an air filter is both easy and inexpensive. Usually, you can find replacement air filters at local hardware stores (like Home Depot) or through online companies (like Amazon).

3. Seal all air leaks throughout your home.

Pipes leak air and heat constantly—often without leaving any indicators that they are doing so. In a typical home, these leaks are hidden behind walls, inside ceilings, or beneath carpeting. You can easily find and fix these leaks by staggering an air pressure measuring system throughout your home. First, attach the pump to a high-pressure gauge and use it to test all exterior pipes. If your pipes are leaking air, you should be able to find and detect them using an air pressure measuring system. If you're unfamiliar with this process, you may want to hire a professional HVAC company (or an experienced neighbor) to assist you.

4. Purchase and install a smart thermostat.



If you're like most homeowners, you probably don't want your furnace or air conditioning to be cranked up when you're not home—or at all, unless the weather calls for it. For example, you probably don't want your furnace to be on when it's a hundred degrees outside or your air conditioning to be on when it's snowing. To address these concerns (and improve your home's energy efficiency), purchase and install a smart thermostat. A smart thermostat is a device that can be programmed to allow you to control your furnace's functions based on specific conditions while also communicating with other devices throughout your home (like lighting) through an infrared signal. On top of being more energy efficient than a traditional thermostat, a smart thermostat can also save money because it shuts down the furnace in response to high temperatures in the home.

5. Clear out your air vents thoroughly.

It's crucial to keep your air vents clean and clear during the winter so that your furnace can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. If you notice that your vents appear to be clogged with debris, dust, or leaves, use a small brush or vacuum to remove them. As an added benefit, removing these obstructions allows your furnace to function more efficiently and lowers the risk that it will overheat or break down. If you want your furnace to function at its absolute best this winter, one of the most useful things you can do is clear out your air vents thoroughly and regularly.

6. Inspect your furnace's ductwork.



The ductwork in your home carries the warm air from your furnace to every room in your house. If your ductwork is clogged with dust, pollen, and debris, this air will have nowhere to go and will become trapped in your house—leaving your furnace unable to function properly. When it comes to [preparing your HVAC for winter](#), you should inspect each of your furnace's ducts carefully so that you can find and address any damage or potential leaks. To help identify these issues, you may want to hire a professional HVAC company to assist you with the inspection process.